

Fifty years ago, the Legislature enacted California's landmark open-meeting law, the Ralph M. Brown Act. In its preamble, the Act declared, "the Legislature finds and declares that the public commissions, boards and councils and the other public agencies in this State exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of the law that their actions be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly." The Act further declares that "The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know."

Last year, our Board adopted a number of open-government measures that put the County of Los Angeles in the forefront of open-meeting and public-record reform. Today, however, those efforts would be seriously undermined here and throughout the state under the Governor's May Revise budget proposal, which seeks repeal of the funded state mandate to post meeting notices and to furnish in advance useful summaries of calendared items to be voted upon.

MOTION

MOLINA	_____
YAROSLAVSKY	_____
KNABE	_____
ANTONOVICH	_____
BURKE	_____

This measure is bad policy and bad economics. Posted notice of meetings and descriptive agendas of pending legislative business are the keys to meaningful public participation in democratic decision-making; without them, the public will be locked out and denied a voice in the debate, and good governance will suffer grievously as a result.

Repealing this mandate as the Governor seeks might save the state a few dollars in administrative expenses, but the cost in squandered public trust and compromised policymaking would be incalculably higher. It's a deal with the devil that we must forcefully oppose.

I, THEREFORE MOVE THAT the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Declare its opposition to the Governor's May Revise proposal to repeal state mandates for Brown Act requirements of public notice of meetings and advance posting of descriptive agendas;
- 2) Instruct its representatives in Sacramento to oppose this provision's inclusion in the state budget.

#

(052003JB)

